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RUEAWJC/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC  
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STATE FOR WHA/BSC, INL, DRL  
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/IP/ITA, DS/T/ATA  
NSC FOR TOMASULO  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [ASEC](#) [BR](#)  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC SECURITY CHALLENGES IN MATO GROSSO  
DO SUL STATE

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

Summary

1. (SBU) Mato Grosso do Sul's public security and human rights challenges are typical of those found in many Brazilian states today. The state's geographic location, sharing an international border with Bolivia and Paraguay, however, creates an additional set of public policy tests for the state government. These relatively open borders allow Mato Grosso do Sul to serve as a conduit for illicit trade in drugs, arms, trafficking in persons and pirated goods which in turn have increased the scope of organized crime in the state. In addition to these external pressures, internally the state is already beset with a number of human rights issues such as protecting marginalized peoples and addressing poor prison conditions. The situation in Mato Grosso do Sul highlights the number of problems at least one Brazilian state is confronting and demonstrates how economic growth, the country's current focus, is not resolving all of its social challenges. End Summary.

International Borders Create Public Security Challenges

2. (SBU) During a March 3-6 visit by Poloff to Mato Grosso do Sul State, Jose Mandu, State Secretariat for Justice and Public Security (SEJUSP) Supervisor for Intelligence, highlighted the difficulties of working in a state with two international borders. Mandu told Poloff that increasing foreign commercial activity has resulted in an expansion of cross-border crime. This phenomenon has created law enforcement problems in all the state's border towns and has stretched to other areas throughout the state. He gave the example of Ponta Pora (PP), across a land border from Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay. PP is infamous for having one of Brazil's highest per capita murder rates which Mandu stated was a direct result of the regional drug trade. Beyond murder, he said that stolen Brazilian vehicles are finding their way to Paraguayan purchasers and that

proceeds from these car sales are then used to pay for drugs in Paraguay for re-sale throughout Brazil. Finally, Mandu stated that beyond drugs, contraband and pirated products, particularly consumer goods, flow easily across the porous border, including small arms from Paraguay that are being sold in Brazil.

13. (SBU) In addition to the illegal trade in drugs, arms, consumer goods and other contraband, the state is also a transit and source point for trafficking in persons. According to Delasnive Miranda Daspert de Souza, President of the Mato Grosso do Sul State Bar Association's (OAB-MS) Human Rights Commission "the state's geographic location leads it to be not only a center of drug trading but also a highway for trafficked persons entering Brazil from Bolivia and Paraguay."

#### Prisons Focus

14. (SBU) SEJUSP's Mandu claimed that aside from regional crime, the state faces a major domestic public security issue because of its poor prison infrastructure. Besides unsanitary conditions, prison overcrowding is a serious concern, Mandu admitted. He noted that the state plans on building two small penitentiaries this year and a mega-complex for both semi-open and traditional jail units for women and younger criminals as a first step. Lack of staff support -- Mandu acknowledged the state employs only half of the total number of security guards it should have to ensure safety -- makes administration difficult and rehabilitation projects even more challenging. (Comment: While Mandu stated that tight budgets resulted in the staffing shortage, rapid economic growth in Mato Grosso do Sul should increase tax receipts, which may help improve prisons in the long-term. End Comment.) A more serious issue arises when inmates belonging to gangs from other states are

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transferred to Mato Grosso do Sul and their followers create support networks within the state. He said that when Sao Paulo's First Capital Command (PCC) criminal organization initiated a wave of violence during May 2006 in Sao Paulo State, the PCC's affiliates in Campo Grande participated locally through a prison uprising that burned down a penitentiary. Mandu pointed to the 2007 creation of the intelligence center which he now heads as the key to preventing similar revolts. (Note: According to Mandu, the information hub is involved in not only stopping large-scale activities but also monitoring the PCC's "standard" crime including drug purchases and sales statewide. nd Note.)

15. (SBU) During visits to the federal prison and the Penal Institute of Campo Grande, a state penitentiary, Poloff observed the vast differences between the two facilities: the first one well-maintained and the latter decrepit and rife with human rights concerns. According to Assistant Warden of the state prison, Aurintheo de Oliveira Pedreira Junior, the facility was built to hold 280 prisoners, yet because of lack of penitentiary space throughout the state, today houses 1085 inmates. Only eight staff members are employed to administer the prison and maintain order, leading the warden and his subordinates to have to rely on prisoner informants to learn about inmate attitudes and potential escape or revolt plans, Pedreira said. Pedreira showed Poloff cells that were meant to hold 6 inmates, where 45-60 had to reside in cramped and unsanitary conditions and in which prisoners had to take turns sleeping. The limited space is partly due to a recent uprising in which inmates held several staff hostage and burned an area within the facility due to complaints about prison conditions. The Penal Institute of Campo Grande contrasted starkly with the federal prison, one of only two such facilities in Brazil, both holding some of the country's most notorious criminals. According to Federal Police Chief and prison warden Arcelino Vieira Damasceno, the facility was built a year and a half ago to house 210 inmates. Unlike its overcrowded state counterpart, it currently holds only 73 inmates. The clean and ultra-modern facility has the most high-tech security infrastructure available as opposed to rusting doors and no apparent camera recordings in the Penal Institute. Lack of hygiene does not seem to be an issue in the federal facility, owing partly to the presence of a full-time physician and dentist, luxuries that do not exist in the state penitentiary.

## More Human Rights Problems

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16. (SBU) Highlighting additional civil liberty concerns, OAB-MS Human Rights Commission President Souza relayed her anger about the length of time necessary to move a case through the judicial system. The state only has a small number of judges who have to review an enormous number of proceedings. When poor Brazilians cannot afford to post bail, they "rot" in the prisons, sometimes for several years while awaiting trial. She added that in a February 2007 uprising in the overcrowded Agricultural Penal Colony of Campo Grande, a policeman's death led Governor Andre Puccinelli to announce a policy -- condemned by a range of local human rights groups -- of shooting first and asking questions later.

17. (SBU) Paulo Angelo de Souza, President of the Marcal de Souza Center for Human Rights (CDHMS), highlighted other human rights problems in the state, including the struggle of the local gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community. Souza said that CDHMS is providing legal support for several former Campo Grande city government employees who believe they were fired from their jobs because of discrimination against them for being from the GLBT community. He added that lack of police protection for homosexuals is an increasing problem in a city, which although largely conservative, has a growing number of people who are openly gay. Both OAB-MS's Souza and CDHMS's Souza also complained about police treatment particularly as it relates to the homeless. According to both, in February 2008, a military police squad aggressively rounded

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up dozens of street dwellers, forced them into police vans and took them to a processing center far away from where they were located, interrogated them for being a public nuisance (though no criminal charges were brought), and then told the homeless that they would have to find their own way back.

## Afro-Brazilians Allege History of Mistreatment

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18. (SBU) Leaders of the local Afro-Brazilian movement claimed that the state was taking little action to address racism. Coordinator of State Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality Raimunda Luzia de Brito stated that throughout Mato Grosso do Sul, as in all of Brazil, blacks face discrimination and are treated as second class citizens. The state government focuses on economic growth rather than social and racial policies, leaving Afro-Brazilians to "fend for themselves," she said. Aleixo Paraguassu Netto, who runs an NGO that researches affirmative action policies and prepares minority and poor youth to take college entrance exams, said that civil society has had to step in where the government has failed to help raise the lives of the state's Afro-Brazilian community. His NGO, the Luther King Institute (named after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) has tried to highlight racism and discrimination repeatedly with a long line of successive state administrations and legislatures only to see little success in terms of measures seeking to address racial inequalities. Antonio Borges dos Santos, president of the government's State Council on the Rights of the Black Population, said that while his organization works to defend Afro-Brazilian rights, he receives little support from higher-level decision-makers. He stated that he believes the government is guilty of racism for limiting the council's budget and staff.

Comment

19. (SBU) Mato Grosso do Sul State is enjoying significant economic growth due to its booming agricultural sector and high commodity prices for its products, especially soybeans. Unfortunately, the state is also in the midst of transnational criminal problems as well as domestic concerns regarding how to deal with some basic human rights issues. The set of challenges the state faces today -- including protecting prisoner and minority rights while at the same time combating drug and human trafficking -- is illustrative of the issues Brazil must address as it continues on its path to economic and democratic development. End Comment.

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